

LOS ANGELES - On Monday, December 9, Representative Xavier Becerra (CA - 30), along with members of the Nat King Cole family, dedicated the newly renamed Nat King Cole Post Office located at 265 South Western Avenue in Los Angeles.

In May 2002, Rep. Becerra introduced H.R. 4797, a bill to re-designate the Oakwood Post Office the Nat King Cole Post Office. The legislation garnered 65 original co-sponsors and passed both the House and Senate unanimously. On October 30, 2002, President Bush signed the bill into law. "About 50 years ago, Nat King Cole was not welcomed by the residents of Hancock Park because of his race," Rep. Becerra said. "Today, this same neighborhood pays tribute to Nat King Cole. This United States Post Office, by act of Congress, will forever bear his name as a reminder that whatever your beginnings, whatever your means, if you persevere, you can achieve anything in this country."

Born in 1919 in Montgomery, Alabama, Nat King Cole moved to Chicago at the age of four where he was raised. His early career brought him to Southern California where he made Los Angeles his home. Nat King Cole went on to record nearly 700 songs in his 23 years with Capitol Records. He contributed so much to that label that its headquarters became known as the "house that Nat built."

"Nat King Cole did not travel an easy road, but he paved a path that opened many doors for all Americans," Rep. Becerra said. "As we look at Nat's impressive songbook, we cannot forget how difficult it was for African American entertainers during that time in our nation's history. He endured much to reach his dreams, including physical intimidation and assault, and his incredible perseverance helped make America a better place."

A crowd of over 100 gathered with the Cole family, including Nat King Cole's younger brother Freddie and daughters Natalie and Carole, to celebrate the occasion. "I am so honored to work with the Cole family to commemorate Nat King Cole's life in this way," Rep. Becerra said. "And I am thankful that the

community had the good judgment to choose to recognize one of our own. Nat King Cole leaves a lasting legacy and impression on this city and nation that will never be forgotten."